

MIDWINTER FAIR!

Brownsville, Texas
January 13 to 15, 1909

SPECIAL PREMIUMS

Including Valuable Town Lots to be given for best display of Valley Truck, Vegetables, etc. A Poultry Show of Valley Poultry to be a special feature.

All Farmers and Truck Growers in the Valley invited to exhibit. Those desiring to enter exhibits should address

W. E. McDAVITT, Brownsville, Texas, or

Brownsville Business Men's Club

With Best Wishes for a

Happy New Year

The
Variety Store
Company

CAPTAIN BARTLETT AS A MAN.

Modest and Shy, Yet With Considerable Force of Character.

At the New Willard Hotel in Washington the National Geographic Society, after decorating Commander Robert E. Peary, U. S. N., as discoverer of the North Pole, will confer another gold medal upon Captain Robert Bartlett, commander of the good ship Roosevelt, "for splendid Arctic work." Recently at the Exchange Club, by the generous courtesy of his friend, Norman H. White, Captain Bartlett had an opportunity to meet some sixty other friends of Mr. White, and show cause why the medal should be granted. That was not the way in which either the host, the guest of honor, or the other guests would have forecasted the occasion, which was announced simply as "a little dinner to the captain," but, following the dinner, he made his debut as a public speaker, and before and after it, in casual encounters, almost everyone had an opportunity to judge whether the National Geographic Society framed its eulogy wisely.

From the standpoint of physical endowment, a hero is frequently a disappointment. Peary can be majestic and imposing in a suit of oilskins or a sweater, thanks to his frame and aspect. Captain Bartlett, commander of his ship, chief of his trail-makers, and the white man who came nearest to sharing the honors of discovery, has not been so far favored by nature. He stands five feet nine; weighs 193 pounds; to the casual eye is spare, rather than robust, because so symmetrically built of bone and muscle. He has put on sixty pounds of flesh since the day when, being then within 120 miles of the Pole, he turned back in order that the commander might more easily make the last dash, and more safely return; but one scarcely realizes where he can have added that tissue, unless one gets sight of a photograph which is not exhibited, a queer up-tilted plate snapped by an Eskimo amateur, which shows the hollows under the eyes and the deep lines worn by strain and privation. Persons who talk glibly of joining a Polar expedition should see that photograph and forever after hold their peace. But Captain Bartlett will not show it to them. In all his eighty-seven lantern slides there are only two in which his closest friends can identify his figure.

The modesty of the man, which these facts suggest takes odd and unusual turns. He is unaffected and sincere, at home with strangers, a man with a genuine hand and an honest tongue; but he looks down or away, after the first glance, and a dull-witted person would be liable to suspect him of planning evasions.

As a matter of fact the captain is naturally shy and on shore he has had to ward off many dangerous questions as well as evade the compliments which to him are more dreadful. If one may conceive of so simple and direct a nature as setting up any trick of manner it might perhaps be truthfully said that he has cultivated an air of detachment. The chances are that he could very promptly carry it to an extreme and end a conversation after the fashion of the monarch of the bridge, if he found himself forced. The certainty is that when in conversation with Mr. White or another whom he knows and trusts, he forgets it altogether and is governed by his strong nose and chin, instead of his bashful eyes. With experience, doubtless, he will get used to a crowd. One suspects that half his hesitations are born of a sensitive conscience. He had received many invitations to speak in public before Commander Peary heard of it, and when Peary asked why he had declined them all, he answered, "Well, Commander, you're commander yet, and you always will be, and I don't know as you'd think if I went to talking that it would be quite fair to you."

This spirit of loyalty, which seems to characterize all the members of the Peary expedition, is no more strongly manifested by any, perhaps, than it is by Captain Bartlett. When Commander Peary was told of Bartlett's scruples, he affectionately damned him for a fool and told him to talk or argue whenever and as he wished. But the voluntary abstention on the part of Bartlett has an interesting bearing on certain stories that went abroad, two or three months ago, touching the relations of the team—for instance, the "soreness" of Bartlett because he could not accompany Peary on the final dash. "Nonsense!" says the captain, with fine and convincing earnestness. "It was all planned out early. I knew my part, then, and agreed to it. If luck had gone against the commander, I might have reached the farthest north, since I was the trail-maker up to the very end, and he might have been caught in a lead as Marvin was."

"He's the greatest man in the world!" Bartlett adds. "Talk about his being a brute and a bully—I never heard him say an unkind word. Always jollying men along, cheering them up. That's his way; and when you think of him, fifty-three years old, never tired, always cheerful, just planning all the time to go ahead, you've got to realize that he's earned and deserved all the fame he's got."

Another subject and object of Captain Bartlett's admiration stand out in plain view as he talks. One is Theodore Roosevelt, "a fine man—a bully man!" he says. The other is the Eskimo dog, "our best friend in the Arctic. And yet," the captain

qualifies, "he's an aggravating devil, sometimes. Take it when you're trying to get a loaded sledge up over a hummock. The dogs are pulling, or supposed to be. You and your Eskimo are pushing behind. Get to the hardest point in the rise, and the dogs will settle back in the traces and strike work and look around at you, just like humans, as if to say, 'You're pushing, are you? That's right! Well, push!'"

Captain Bartlett is thirty-four years old, third in the family of nine children of a well-to-do merchant in Brigus, Newfoundland, which town, some twenty miles from St. John's, is likewise the birthplace of his traveling companion, Ambrose S. Foley. Mr. Foley charges it upon the captain that he has not yet been home; the captain explains that he had to fetch the Roosevelt up to take part in the Hudson-Fulton parade, that from time to time he has needed to consult Commander Peary and that he considers himself in a way, still under the commander's orders. "I'd like to go back in the Arctic," Captain Bartlett adds. "Up there, you feel as if you were doing something—getting somewhere—and you're not bothered. Yes, it's work, hard work, but there are no telephones to worry you, and if you can't go ahead you can keep trying. I don't know just what the 'charm of the Arctic' is. I've read about it in story books, but they never seemed to get hold of it, and I can't explain myself. All is, after you've been Far North, you want to be there again."

"I want to go to the Antarctic," the captain proceeds, almost as if he were a professional investigator of Polar Circles, but with an earnestness that leaves no doubt of his sincerity. "It's interesting and, compared to what the North Pole explorers have had, it seems to me it would be easy. I wish the commander would try for it."

But, when it is suggested that, if Commander Peary does not feel inclined to head an expedition to the South Pole, perhaps Dr. Cook would agree to do so, Captain Bartlett laughs.

To Wed Taft's Niece.

New York, Dec. 29.—Miss Louise Taft, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Taft, of this city and a niece of President Taft, will become the bride of George H. Snowden, a mining and timber man of Seattle, tomorrow.

The romance began on the White Star liner Cedric en route to Gibraltar last year when both Snowden and Miss Taft were on a European tour. Last summer Miss Taft visited the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition and it is said, they became formally engaged then. After the ceremony Snowden and his bride will spend three months abroad.